

NEWS RELEASE

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ATKINSON KILLER PLEADS GUILTY

"We will seek the death penalty" said County Attorney Rick Romley in announcing that Felipe Petrona Cabanas plead guilty to first degree murder in the shooting death of Phoenix Police Officer Mark Atkinson.

On March 26, 1999 Officer Mark Atkinson was ambushed and killed while pursuing alleged drug dealers. As a result three individuals were arrested. Felipe Cabanas (17 years old at the time of the offense), the alleged trigger man, Oscar Garcia-Martinez (22 years old at the time of the offense) and Oberlin Cabanas-Salgado (18 years old at the time of the offense) were charged with Officer Atkinson's death. In addition the three defendants were charged with numerous narcotics offenses and the attempted murder of Security Guard Roy Roryverdign who happened upon the scene of the crimes.

Senior Homicide Prosecutor Noel Levy said, "this tragic murder destroyed the future of Officer Atkinson and his family. This crime cries out for the death penalty."

Mr. Cabanas is scheduled to be sentenced before Superior Court Judge Frank Galati on February 15, 2002. Mr. Garcia Martinez and Mr. Cabanas-Salgado are awaiting trial.